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ROSLI DAHLAN

v.

TAN SRI ABDUL GANI PATAIL & ORS

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HIGH COURT MALAYA, KUALA LUMPUR
VAZEER ALAM MYDIN MEERA JC
[CIVIL SUIT NO: 21NCVC-84-11-2013]
10 JUNE 2014

C ***CIVIL PROCEDURE:*** *Striking out - Application for - Questions of law or issues raised in pleadings meriting consideration - Causes of action not inherently improbable or obviously unsustainable disclosed in pleadings - Whether action to be struck out - Rules of Court 2012, O. 18 r. 19*

D ***CONSTITUTIONAL LAW:*** *Attorney General - Prosecutorial discretion - Power to institute, conduct or discontinue proceedings - Discretion not to be used for unlawful or improper purpose - Prosecutorial discretion not unfettered - Whether courts can intervene where exercise of discretion unconstitutional*

E

CONSTITUTIONAL LAW: *Public Prosecutor - Privileges and immunities - Whether prosecutorial immunity exists - Whether public prosecutor and his deputies can be held liable in damages for malicious, deliberate or injurious wrongdoing*

F

CIVIL PROCEDURE: *Pleadings - Material facts - Whether cause of action pleaded with some degree of particularisation - Whether cause of action could be made out from facts pleaded*

G ***CIVIL PROCEDURE:*** *Pleadings - Annexure to pleadings - Whether statement of claim can contain annexure of pleadings filed in other suits - Leave of court - Whether required*

CIVIL PROCEDURE: *Striking out - Amendment - Claim that can be saved by amendment should not be summarily struck out - Cause not* H *to be defeated by reason of misjoinder or non-joinder*

CIVIL PROCEDURE: *Parties - Legal entity - Whether action against police should be brought against Inspector General of Police and not Polis Diraja Malaysia - Whether claim against Corruption Agency (ACA) can* I *be continued against Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission (MACC) - Rules of Court 2012, O. 15 r. 6 - Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009, s. 74*

LIMITATION: *Public authorities - Filing of suit - Whether within time stipulated - Whether action against public authority time barred - Public Authorities Protection Act 1948 s. 2(a)*

The plaintiff was an advocate and solicitor and the legal advisor to one Dato' Ramli, a police officer with Polis Diraja Malaysia ('PDRM'). The plaintiff alleged that the second defendant enlisted the assistance of the first and the fourth defendants to eliminate Dato' Ramli from the hierarchy of succession in the PDRM by using the third to tenth defendants. The enmity that the first and second defendants had for the plaintiff and Dato' Ramli were set out in detail in another civil suit filed by Dato' Ramli against several of the defendants herein. The wrongful acts of the defendants pleaded in that suit were adopted by the plaintiff as part of the plaintiff's allegations of wrongful acts done by the defendants. The plaintiff alleged that as part of this conspiracy, he was also investigated under the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001. The plaintiff claimed that the eighth defendant, together with some other officers of the ACA, embellished the investigations to surreptitiously and unlawfully cause false information to be published by various mainstream newspapers and other media outlets concerning the investigation involving Dato' Ramli and the plaintiff. On 11 October 2007, the plaintiff was brutally arrested in his office in full view of his staff, and on 12 October 2007, a charge under s. 32(2) of the Anti-Corruption Act 1997 was preferred against the plaintiff. The plaintiff's arrest and subsequent charge was sensationalised by several mainstream newspapers to implicate the plaintiff as hiding illegitimate assets valued at RM27 million. The plaintiff filed civil suits against three mainstream newspapers for defamation and conspiracy in regards to the sensational reports. The wrongful acts of the defendants as set out in the cases against the newspapers were pleaded by the plaintiff as part of the wrongful acts of the defendants in this action. The plaintiff was later acquitted of the charges by the Sessions Court. Hence, the plaintiff claimed against the defendants for conspiracy, false and malicious investigation, abuse of power, abuse of prosecutorial discretion, malicious prosecution and prosecutorial misconduct and/or public misfeasance for having acted in such manner against the plaintiff without any reasonable and probable cause and malice and/or acted with ill-will or evil motive and/or with personal spite or acted recklessly or intentionally to injure the plaintiff. The defendants did not file any defence and instead applied to strike out the plaintiff's

claim on the grounds that: (i) all the causes of action were barred by the Public Authorities Protection Act 1948 ('PAPA'); (ii) there was lack of sufficient and cogent particulars to support the allegations; (iii) there was misjoinder of the ninth and tenth defendants as parties to this action as the ninth defendant was not a legal entity and the tenth defendant was not in existence at the material time; (iv) the first defendant who was the Public Prosecutor and the fourth, fifth, and sixth defendants who were Deputy Public Prosecutors were subject to absolute prosecutorial immunity; and (v) in para. 3.12 of the statement of claim ('SOC') the plaintiff referred to matters pleaded in another suit and adopted those pleadings as part of the plaintiff's pleadings. Counsel for the defendants submitted that the SOC cannot refer to other statements of claim filed in other suits and adopt the same.

Held (dismissing application with costs):

(1) The causes of action which had been pleaded with some degree of particularisation were (i) conspiracy to injure; (ii) malicious prosecution; and (iii) abuse of legal process. The other causes of action of false and malicious investigation, abuse of power, abuse of prosecutorial discretion and prosecutorial misconduct and/or public misfeasance, though not pleaded with a preferred degree of clarity, could still be made out when the facts pleaded in the SOC were taken in their entirety. The essential elements of each of these torts had been set out in the SOC. (para 41)

(2) So long as there are some questions of law or issues raised in the pleadings that merit consideration, no matter how slight the chances of success, the court ought not to use its summary powers of dismissal and strike out the action. In the circumstances, it was not appropriate to strike out the SOC under O. 18 r. 19 of the Rules of Court 2012 ('ROC') for the SOC clearly disclosed several causes of action which on the facts pleaded were not inherently improbable or obviously unsustainable; *Bandar Builder Sdn Bhd & Ors v. United Malayan Banking Corporation Bhd*; (refd). (paras 55 & 56)

(3) On the pleaded facts, the filing of the suit on 22 November 2013 in respect of all the causes of action was well within the time stipulated in s. 2(a) of PAPA. (para 57)

(4) Although prosecutorial authority is constitutionally vested in the Attorney General, the prosecutorial discretion must be exercised for its proper constitutional purpose and not for some unlawful or improper purpose. The prosecutorial discretion of the Attorney-General is not unfettered and in appropriate cases, where the exercise of that discretion is unconstitutional, or done in bad faith for an extraneous purpose, or when power is abused, the courts can intervene and redress that wrong; *Pengarah Tanah dan Galian, Wilayah Persekutuan v. Sri Lempah Enterprise Sdn Bhd*; (refd). (paras 80 & 85)

(5) There were allegations of malice in the form of abuse of prosecutorial power and improper exercise of prosecutorial discretion for an improper purpose. These allegations stood uncontroverted at the moment and the court's role at this point in time was to ascertain if, in the event the facts as alleged were proved by the plaintiff at trial, the reliefs sought could flow from the pleaded causes of action. Public officers, including the Public Prosecutor and his deputies, can be held liable in damages for malicious, deliberate or injurious wrongdoing. In the premise, there were reasonable causes of action disclosed in the pleadings that merited a trial. (para 98)

(6) The ninth defendant was not a legal entity and under the relevant provisions of the Police Act 1967, the action would have to be brought against the Inspector General of Police and not PDRM. However, when any claim can be saved by an amendment, it should not be summarily struck out. Further, O. 15 r. 6 of the ROC provides that a cause or matter shall not be defeated by reason of the misjoinder or non-joinder of any party. The plaintiff was ready to amend the writ and SOC to substitute the Inspector General of Police in place of PDRM as the ninth defendant. Therefore, there was no necessity to strike out the claim against the ninth defendant when such an amendment would cure the defect. (para 108)

(7) In respect of the tenth defendant, the Malaysian Anti Corruption Commission ('MACC'), though at the material time was not in existence, its predecessor the Anti Corruption Agency ('ACA') was and the acts complained of against some of the defendants were done in their capacity as officers of

A the ACA. By virtue of s. 74 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009, the tenth defendant as the successor of the ACA was on the facts pleaded the proper party to be brought in as a defendant in this action. (para 109)

B **(8)** Particulars of wrongdoing alleged by the plaintiff against the defendants should more appropriately be specifically pleaded in the body of the SOC rather that refer to pleadings filed by the plaintiff in some other suit and annexing the same to the SOC. However, there is no blanket prohibition against the C annexing of information to the SOC by way of a schedule or annexure. Such schedules or annexures may be allowed with leave of court. In any event, the defendants' complaint could be easily cured by an amendment to the pleadings to include the specific plea of the alleged wrongful acts pleaded in the D other suit by amending para. 3.12 of the SOC. As such the defects complained of by the defendants could not be grounds to strike out the entire SOC. (para 113)

Case(s) referred to:

Ahmad Hussin v. Hajjah Mek Binti Hussain [1972] 1 LNS 3 FC ***(refd)***

E *Ahmad Tajudin Ishak v. Suruhanjaya Pelabuhan Pulau Pinang [1997] 2 CLJ 225 CA* ***(refd)***

Bandar Builder Sdn Bhd & Ors v. United Malayan Banking Corporation Bhd [1993] 4 CLJ 7 SC ***(refd)***

Common Cause, A Registered Society v. Union of India AIR 1996 SC 3538 F ***(refd)***

E Gopal & Anor v. Awang Mona [1976] 1 LNS 23 HC ***(refd)***

Elguzouli-Daf v. Commissioner of Police and Another [1995] QB 335 ***(refd)***

Foaminol Laboratories Ltd v. British Artid Plastics Ltd [1941] 2 All ER 393 ***(refd)***

Henry v. British Columbia (Attorney General) [2012] BCJ No. 1965; [2012] G *BCSC 1401* ***(refd)***

Ibrahim Mohideen Kutty v. Timbalan Menteri Dalam Negeri & Ors [2003] 6 CLJ 144 HC ***(refd)***

Johnson Tan Han Seng v. PP & Other Appeals [1977] 1 LNS 38 FC ***(refd)***

Kerajaan Negeri Selangor & Ors v. Sagong Tasi & Ors [2005] 4 CLJ 169 H *CA* ***(refd)***

Law Society of Singapore v. Tan Guan Huat Neo Phyllis [2007] SGHC 207; [2008] 2 SLR 239 ***(refd)***

Lim Kean v. Choo Koon [1969] 1 LNS 94 HC ***(refd)***

Long Samat & Ors v. Public Prosecutor [1974] 1 LNS 80 FC ***(refd)***

Mak Koon Yong & Anor v. Municipal Councillors Malacca [1967] 1 LNS I *98 HC* ***(refd)***

Malaysian Building Society Bhd v. Tan Sri General Ungku Nazaruddin Ungku Mohamed [1998] 2 CLJ 340 CA ***(refd)***
Metroplex Holdings Sdn Bhd v. Commerce International Merchant Bankers Bhd [2013] 8 CLJ 329 CA ***(refd)***
Miazga v. Kvello Estate and Others [2009] SCC 51 ***(refd)***
Nelles v. Ontario [1989] SCJ No 86 ***(refd)***
Ng Kim Moi & Ors v. Pentadbir Tanah Daerah, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan Darul Khusus [2004] 3 CLJ 131 CA ***(refd)***
Ong Ah Bee v. Hii Chung Siong, Robin [1993] 1 CLJ 504 HC ***(refd)***
Pengarah Tanah dan Galian, Wilayah Persekutuan v. Sri Lempah Enterprise Sdn Bhd [1978] 1 LNS 143 FC ***(refd)***
Penolong Kanan Pendaftar Mahkamah Tinggi Johor Bahru v. Tan Beng Sooi [1997] 2 CLJ 409 CA ***(refd)***
Pet Far Eastern (M) Sdn Bhd v. Tay Young Huat & Ors [1999] 2 CLJ 886 HC ***(refd)***
Premachandra v. Major Montague Jayawickrema [1994] 2 Sri LR 90 ***(refd)***
Proulx v. Quebec (Attorney-General) [2001] SCC 66 ***(refd)***
Rawther v. Abdul Kareem [1966] 1 LNS 154 FC ***(refd)***
Renault SA v. Inokom Corporation Sdn Bhd & Anor and Other Applicaions [2010] 5 CLJ 32 CA ***(refd)***
Riches v. Director of Public Prosecutions [1973] 2 All ER 935 CA ***(refd)***
Riga Sdn Bhd v. Awang Sepian Haji Awang Joini & 3 Ors [2005] 1 LNS 251 HC ***(refd)***
Saripah Manap & Ors v. Emar Sdn Bhd & Ors [1997] 4 CLJ 194 HC ***(refd)***
Savrimuthu Sinnapan v. Public Prosecutor [1987] 1 CLJ 368 SC ***(refd)***
SCK Group Bhd & Anor v. Sunny Liew Siew Pang & Anor [2010] 9 CLJ 389 CA ***(refd)***
See Thong & Anor v. Saw Beng Chong [2012] 1 LNS 817 CA ***(refd)***
Simmah Timber Industries Sdn Bhd v. David Low See Keat & Ors [1999] 1 LNS 14 HC ***(refd)***
Spring v. Guardian Assurance PLC and Others [1994] 3 All ER 129 ***(refd)***
Teh Cheng Poh v. PP [1978] 1 LNS 202 PC ***(refd)***
Thilagavathy Durairajoo v. Penolong Kanan Pendaftar [2002] 1 LNS 148 HC ***(refd)***
Three Rivers DC v. Bank of England (No. 3) [2003] 2 AC 1 ***(refd)***
Tractors Malaysia Bhd v. Tio Chee Hing [1975] 1 LNS 133 PC ***(refd)***

Legislation referred to:
Anti-Corruption Act 1997, ss. 21(4), 32(1)(c), 32(2)
Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001, s. 77
Courts of Judicature Act 1964, s. 14(1)
Criminal Procedure Code, s. 376(i)
Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance 1969, s. 5

A Federal Constitution, art. 145
Government Proceedings Act 1956, s. 6
Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009, ss. 72, 74
Public Authorities Protection Act 1948, s. 2(a)
Rules of Court 2012, O. 15 r. 6, O. 18 r. 19(1)(a), (b), (c), (d)

B *For the plaintiff - Chetan Jethwani (Parvinder Kaur Cheema with him); M/s Kumar Partnership*
For the defendants - Cecil WM Abraham (Amarjeet Singh & Rishwant Singh with him); M/s Zul Rafique & Partners

C *Reported by Amutha Suppayah*

JUDGMENT

D **Vazeer Alam Mydin Meera JC:**

[1] The plaintiff pleads in his statement of claim that he is an advocate and solicitor and a partner in the law firm of Messrs Lee Hishammuddin Allen & Gledhill. The plaintiff has been in active practice as an advocate and solicitor since May 1988.

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[2] The plaintiff in para. 2.1 to 2.12 of the statement of claim identifies the defendants and attributes the following facts to them either jointly or severally.

F **[3]** The first defendant, Tan Sri Abdul Gani Patail, was and is the Attorney-General ("AG") of Malaysia appointed under art. 145 of the Federal Constitution. The first defendant is also the Public Prosecutor of Malaysia and has the discretion to institute, conduct or discontinue any legal proceedings. The AG has control over all officers of the Attorney-General's Chamber ("AGC") who act on his authority.

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[4] The second defendant, Tan Sri Musa Hassan, was at the material time the Inspector General of Police ("IGP") appointed under the provisions of the Police Act, 1967. The PDRM and its members come under the direct command and control of the second defendant and acted on his authority.

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[5] The third defendant, Tan Sri Abu Kassim Mohamed, was the former Director General of the Anti-Corruption Agency ("ACA") which was re-established as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission ("MACC"). He is now the Chief

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Commissioner of the MACC vested with the control and direction of the MACC and all other persons appointed or engaged for MACC duties.

[6] The fourth defendant, Dato' Nordin bin Hassan, was at the material time the Head of Prosecutions of the Anti-Corruption Agency ("ACA") and acted under the control, directions and authority of the first and third defendants. The fourth defendant was the immediate superior of the sixth and eighth defendants.

[7] The fifth defendant, Dato' Abdul Razak bin Musa, succeeded the fourth defendant as the Director of Prosecutions of the MACC and acted under the control, directions and authority of the first and third defendants.

[8] The sixth defendant, Kevin Anthony Morais, was at the material time a Deputy Public Prosecutor with the AGC and was seconded as the Deputy Director of Prosecution of the ACA and reported directly to the fourth and subsequently to the fifth defendant and acted on the authority of the Attorney-General.

[9] The seventh defendant, Chew Kam Soon, was at the material time a police officer holding the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police serving in the Internal Disciplinary Unit of PDRM. The plaintiff avers that the second defendant had direct control and authority over the seventh defendant.

[10] The eighth defendant, Saiful Ezral bin Ariffin, was at the material time an investigating officer of the ACA. The plaintiff avers that the eighth defendant is subject to the control, supervision and direction of the Director General of the ACA.

[11] The ninth defendant, Polis Diraja Malaysia, is a statutory body set up under the Police Act, 1967. The plaintiff avers that the PDRM is the institution responsible for maintenance of law and order, the preservation of peace and security of Malaysia, the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension and prosecution of offenders and the collection of security intelligence. The plaintiff further avers that the PDRM is vicariously liable for the actions and omissions of its members who participated in the matters complained of in this action.

[12] The tenth defendant, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission ("MACC"), formerly known as the ACA, was re-established as the national agency for the prevention of

corruption and is the successor to the ACA. The plaintiff avers that the MACC is vicariously liable for any act or omission of its officers in the exercise of their powers, functions and discharge of their duties when exercised or performed in bad faith.

[13] The plaintiff avers that the eleventh defendant, the Government of Malaysia, is vicariously liable/responsible for the actions and omissions of all members of the PDRM, the AGC and officers of the ACA or the MACC (as the case may be) who had according to the plaintiff participated in the matters complained of in this suit.

[14] The plaintiff further avers that the functions, powers, duties and discretions reposed in the first to the eighth defendants are in the form of a public trust. Therefore, first to the eighth defendants are required to carry out their functions, duties and powers and exercise their discretion reasonably, fairly, impartially and in good faith. The plaintiff asserts that the first to the eighth defendants have failed to do so.

[15] The plaintiff avers that he was the legal adviser to one Dato' Pahlawan Ramli bin Yusuff ("Dato' Ramli"), a career police officer with PDRM who had risen to the rank of Commissioner of Police and served as the Director of Commercial Crimes Investigations Department, Bukit Aman.

[16] The plaintiff alleges that the relationship between the second defendant and Dato' Ramli was one of guarded enmity and that when the second defendant rose to become the Deputy IGP and IGP, he had allegedly enlisted the assistance of the first and the fourth defendants to eliminate Dato' Ramli from the hierarchy of succession in the PDRM by using the third to tenth defendants.

[17] The plaintiff further alleges that the enmity between the second defendant and Dato' Ramli arose from the time when both the plaintiff and the second defendant served as officers in the Criminal Investigations Department, Bukit Aman, where Dato' Ramli was the second defendant's immediate superior officer.

[18] The plaintiff further avers that he had, upon the request of the board of directors of Malaysian Airlines System Bhd ("MAS"), approached the CCID to seek clarification on suspicious ongoing in the investigation involving the former Chairman of MAS, Tan Sri Tajuddin Ramli ("TST"). At the plaintiff's request, Dato' Ramli

accompanied the MAS board of directors and management, namely, Dato' Seri Idris Jala, Tan Sri Munir Majid, Dato' Anuar Zaini and Dr Wafi Nazrin bin Tan Sri Abdul Hamid, to brief the then Prime Minister Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi (now Tun), that there was basis to prosecute TST for various crimes. This was contrary to the decision by the AGC not to prosecute TST and to mark the case for no further action.

[19] The plaintiff states that during that briefing to the Prime Minister, Dato' Ramli had stated that if the first defendant was reluctant to prosecute TST, the CCID would have the necessary resources to conduct such prosecution. This, according to the plaintiff had cause the first defendant's permanent displeasure towards the plaintiff and Dato' Ramli.

[20] The plaintiff further states that the enmity that the first and second defendants had for the plaintiff and Dato' Ramli are set out in detail in the civil suit filed by Dato' Ramli on 1 November 2013 in KLHC Civil Suit No. 21NCVC-72-11-2013 against the first, second and several other defendants herein ("Dato' Ramli's suit"), *inter alia* for conspiracy, malicious prosecution and misfeasance in public office. The wrongful acts of the defendants pleaded in Dato' Ramli's suit are adopted by the plaintiff as part of the plaintiff's allegations of wrongful acts done by the defendants herein.

[21] The plaintiff states that in addition to the wrongful acts of the defendants pleaded in Dato' Ramli's suit, the conspiracy by the defendants to eliminate Dato' Ramli from the hierarchy in the PDRM arose from several other factors including:

(i) The "Black Eye" incident involving Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim ("DSAI"), where in 1998, the first and second defendant were allegedly implicated as having fabricated medical evidence involving the assault and injury of DSAI whilst in police custody. The plaintiff states that during the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the 'Black Eye' incident he had advised Dato' Ramli not to perjure himself and to refuse to assist the first and second defendants in fabricating any evidence.

(ii) The Goh Cheng Poh case – where the second defendant is alleged to have been implicated to be involved with a money lending and gaming syndicate operated by a person known as Goh Cheng Poh @ Tengku Goh. The plaintiff alleges that the

first defendant abdicated his constitutional duties when the AGC at his behest failed to contest Goh Cheng Poh's *habeas corpus* application. Consequently, the plaintiff was tasked to assist in the preparation of affidavits for the then deputy Minister of Home Affairs Dato' Johari Baharom, Dato' Ramli and other CCID officers. The plaintiff alleges, that in a turn of events, the AGC elected to prosecute the CCID officers for purportedly procuring false statements from confidential informants and thus undermining the CCID's actions against the said Goh Cheng Poh.

[22] The plaintiff states that, further, as part of the defendant's acts to remove Dato' Ramli from the hierarchy of PDRM, the plaintiff too was targeted and in this regard the plaintiff avers that in 2007, the first and second defendants enlisted the assistance of the fourth and sixth defendants, as well as the assistance of various officers of the MACC and the Unit Tatatertib of the PDRM, to cause investigations to be made against the plaintiff and Dato' Ramli and subsequently caused the plaintiff and Dato' Ramli to be charged for various criminal offences.

[23] The plaintiff alleges that as part of this conspiracy by the defendants, one Dzulkifli bin Ahmad, a Deputy Public Prosecutor in the AGC, then caused a search to be made to various financial institutions within Malaysia to determine the financial standing of the plaintiff. This search was made ostensibly under the provisions of the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act, 2001. The plaintiff contends that this surreptitious search against the plaintiff was done with malice and is illegal.

[24] The plaintiff further states that on or about 17 July 2007 and 16 August 2007, the sixth defendant acting together with the eighth defendant had wrongfully issued notices to the plaintiff under s. 32(1)(c) of the Anti-Corruption Act, requiring the plaintiff to declare properties allegedly held by the plaintiff on behalf of Dato' Ramli ("the Rosli notices"). The plaintiff alleges that the Rosli notices were deliberately ambiguous, defective and unlawful with the result that the plaintiff was unable to effectively respond to the same. A similar notice under s. 32(1)(c) of the Anti-Corruption Act was also issued against Dato' Ramli ("the Ramli notices").

[25] The plaintiff further avers that with the issuance of the Rosli and Ramli notices, the eighth defendant together with some other officers of the ACA (the identity of whom the plaintiff states would be available upon discovery or interrogatories) embellished the investigations to surreptitiously and unlawfully cause false information to be published by various mainstream newspapers and other media outlets concerning the investigation involving Dato' Ramli and the plaintiff, which according to the plaintiff was sensationalised as the "RM27 million Cop" story. The plaintiff avers that the false information so published was in contravention of s. 21(4) of the Anti-Corruption Act, 1997.

[26] The plaintiff states that on or about 11 October 2007, the plaintiff was brutally arrested in his office in full view of his staff, and on 12 October 2007, a charge under s. 32(2) of the Anti-Corruption Act was preferred against the plaintiff alleging that he had failed to comply with the Rosli notices ("the Rosli charge"). The plaintiff states that at that time Dato' Ramli had not been arrested nor charged. The plaintiff's arrest and subsequent charge was sensationalised by several mainstream newspapers to implicate the plaintiff as hiding illegitimate assets valued at RM27 million.

[27] The plaintiff has filed civil suits against three mainstream newspapers for defamation and conspiracy in regards the sensational reports, and they are:

(i) KLHC Civil Suit No. S-21-249-2009: *Rosli Dahlan v. Utusan Malaysia & 16 Ors* ("the *Utusan* case");

(ii) KLHC Civil Suit No. S-23-105-2009: *Rosli Bin Dahlan v. The Star Publications (M) Sdn Bhd & 2 Ors* ("*The Star* case"); and

(iii) KLHC Civil Suit No. S-21-325-2009: *Rosli Bin Dahlan v. New Straits Times Publications & 6 Ors* ("the *NST* case").

[28] The plaintiff states that the conspiracy by the defendants to implicate the plaintiff in the financial affairs of Dato' Ramli are set out in the *Utusan* case and the wrongful acts of the defendants as set out in the *Utusan* case, the *Star* case and the *NST* case are pleaded by the plaintiff as part of the wrongful acts of the defendants in this action.

[29] The plaintiff states that on or about 20 December 2010, the plaintiff was acquitted of the charges and the Sessions Court found that there was no reasonable ground or probable cause for

A the charges to be preferred against the plaintiff. The plaintiff contends that the charge against him was conceived and preferred about two weeks before any charges were preferred against Dato' Ramli with malicious intent and as retaliation for having acted as Dato' Ramli's legal adviser and counsel.

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[30] The plaintiff further avers that two weeks after the plaintiff was charged, Dato' Ramli was subjected to malicious prosecution and was made to face several charges in the Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu Sessions Courts.

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[31] The plaintiff also states that the defendants implicated the plaintiff in the affairs of Dato' Ramli in a manner that caused harm, injury, loss and damage to the plaintiff where each of them had their own motivations for furthering the conspiracy by abusing the resources, facilities and officers of the ACA and the PDRM.

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[32] The plaintiff's pleaded causes of action are found in para. 4 till 8 of the statement of claim and he claims against the defendants for conspiracy, false and malicious investigation, abuse of power, abuse of prosecutorial discretion, malicious prosecution

E and prosecutorial misconduct and/or public misfeasance for having acted in such manner against the plaintiff without any reasonable and probable cause and malice and/or acted with ill-will or evil motive and/or with personal spite or acted recklessly or intentionally to injure the plaintiff.

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[33] The plaintiff goes on to plead in paras. 4.4 and 4.5 that the defendants were actuated by malice and bad faith and/or with ill-will or evil motive and/or with personal spite or acted recklessly or intentionally to injure the plaintiff without any honest belief that

G the plaintiff had committed or was guilty of any crime, let alone any probable guilt of the crime imputed. And by reason of the facts pleaded, the plaintiff avers that the defendants cannot invoke any immunity provided by any legislation relating to government immunities or immunities accorded to public officers.

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[34] The plaintiff pleads that in consequence of the aforesaid matters, he has suffered injury, trauma, loss of reputation, loss of good name and goodwill, damage to his professional, personal and societal standing, as well as damage to his career and has been

I put to considerable trouble, inconvenience, anxiety and expense and has suffered loss and damage including the sum of RM750,000

in legal cost for defending the criminal charge preferred against him. Wherefore, the plaintiff claims, special, general, punitive, aggravated and exemplary damages plus interest and cost.

[35] The defendants did not file defence and instead they have applied *vide* encl. 4 to strike out the plaintiff's claim under O. 18 r. 19 (1)(a) or (b) or (c) or (d) of the Rules of Court 2012 ("ROC"). It is essential to note, that in the absence of the defence and there being no denial in the affidavit in support affirmed by the first defendant of the facts and the matters pleaded in the statement of claim, the court will have to proceed as if the facts pleaded in the statement of claim remains untraversed. The defendants have premised their application mainly on points of law and the grounds of their application can be categorised as follows:

(i) That all the causes of action pleaded in the statement of claim are barred by the Public Authorities Protection Act 1948;

(ii) There is lack of sufficient and cogent particulars to support the allegations;

(iii) There is misjoinder of the ninth and tenth defendants as parties to this action as the ninth defendant is not a legal entity and the tenth defendant was not in existence at the material; and

(v) The first defendant who is the Public Prosecutor and the fourth, fifth, and sixth defendants who are Deputy Public Prosecutors are subject to absolute prosecutorial immunity.

[36] As such the defendants submit that the entire statement of claim ought to be struck out for it does not demonstrate any reasonable cause of action; or is scandalous frivolous or vexatious; or that it may prejudice embarrass, delay the fair trial of the matter; or is an abuse of process.

[37] As the defendants' application is grounded on all four limbs of O. 18 r. 19(1), I have followed the approach taken by the Court of Appeal in *See Thong & Anor v. Saw Beng Chong* [2012] 1 LNS 817; [2013] 3 AMR 385; [2013] 3 MLJ 235 on the manner in which such applications are to be construed and determined. In the premise, I had firstly considered the application under the first limb of O. 18 r. 19(1), ie, that the pleadings do not disclose any reasonable cause of action. And in doing so, no reference was made to any of the affidavits filed.

A **(a) O. 18 r. 19(1)(a) ROC – Reference To Pleadings**

[38] The principles of law governing an application under O. 19 r. 18(1)(a) of the ROC have been very well restated by Ramly Ali JCA (now FCJ) in *See Thong & Anor v. Saw Beng Chong* [2012] 1 LNS 817; [2013] 3 AMR 385; [2013] 3 MLJ 235 in the following terms:

> ... striking out a claim for no reasonable cause of action under sub-para (1)(a) is only appropriate in a plain and obvious case. The learned judge must be satisfied that the statement of claim as it stands is insufficient, even if proved, to entitle the plaintiffs to the relief which they asked for. The procedure is a summary procedure. It should only be adopted when it is conspicuously clear that the claim on the face of it is obviously unsustainable. *Just look at the statement of claim. The test to be applied is whether on the face of the statement of claim, the court is prepared to conclude that the cause of action is obviously unsustainable* (see Federal Court decision in *New Straits Times (Malaysia) Bhd v. Kumpulan Kertas Niaga Sdn Bhd & Anor* [1985] 1 MLJ 226).
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> ...
>
> *The statement of claim may not be perfect and 'not-so strong' in supporting the appellants' claim; but the mere fact that the case is weak and is unlikely to succeed at trial is not a ground for the claim to be struck out* (see *Bandar Builder Sdn Bhd & Ors v. United Malayan Banking Corporation Bhd* [1993] 3 MLJ 36 (Supreme Court); *Loh Holdings Sdn Bhd v. Peglin Development Sdn Bhd & Anor* [1984] 2 MLJ 105).
> (emphasis added)

[39] A careful perusal of the statement of claim shows that the plaintiff has pleaded the following causes of action:

(i) Conspiracy;

(ii) Misfeasance by a public officer;

(iii) Malicious prosecution;

(iv) Abuse of power;

(v) Prosecutorial misconduct;

(vi) Abuse of prosecutorial discretion; and

(vii) False and malicious investigation.

[40] In applying the above mentioned principles relating to striking out a claim for want of any reasonable cause of action, I have scrutinised the statement of claim thoroughly and am not prepared to conclude that the causes of action are obviously unsustainable.

[41] I agree with learned counsel for the defendants that even though the plaintiff in para. 4.1 of the statement of claim has spelt out a number of causes of action against the defendants, as enumerated above; the causes of action which have been pleaded with some degree of particularisation are (i) conspiracy to injure, (ii) malicious prosecution and (iii) abuse of legal process. The other causes of action of false and malicious investigation, abuse of power, abuse of prosecutorial discretion and prosecutorial misconduct and/or public misfeasance, though not pleaded with a preferred degree of clarity, could still be made out when the facts pleaded in the statement of claim are taken in their entirety. I find that the essential elements of each of these torts have been set out in the statement of claim.

(i) The Tort Of Conspiracy To Injure

[42] The elements of the tort of conspiracy to injure are:

(a) The existence of an agreement between two or more persons to do unlawful acts or lawful acts by unlawful means;

(b) The purpose of the agreement is to injure the plaintiff; and

(c) In consequence of the overt acts done in execution of the agreement the plaintiff suffers damage.

See *Simmah Timber Industries Sdn Bhd v. David Low See Keat & Ors* [1999] 1 LNS 14; [1999] 5 MLJ 421 HC; *Renault SA v. Inokom Corporation Sdn Bhd & Anor and Other Applicaions* [2010] 5 CLJ 32; [2010] 5 MLJ 394 CA; *SCK Group Bhd & Anor v. Sunny Liew Siew Pang & Anor* [2010] 9 CLJ 389, CA). I find that the plaintiff's averment in paras. 3, 4, 5 and 8 of the statement of claim contains sufficient pleadings of facts to sustain a claim for conspiracy.

(ii) The Tort Of Misfeasance In Public Office

[43] According to the learned authors of *Clerk & Lindsell on Torts* (20th edn. para. 14-102, Sweet & Maxwell) the tort of misfeasance in public office has its origin in "the electoral

corruption cases of the late seventeenth century" and was "expanded in the nineteenth century to cover the liability of judges of inferior courts for malicious acts within their jurisdiction". The existence of this common law action in our jurisdiction was acknowledged and recognised by Gopal Sri Ram JCA (later FCJ) in his minority judgment in *Ng Kim Moi & Ors v. Pentadbir Tanah Daerah, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan Darul Khusus* [2004] 3 CLJ 131; [2004] 3 MLJ 301, in the following terms:

> As for the common law, if the appellants are to recover damages in a case as the present, their remedy lies in what Lord Diplock in *Dunlop v. Woollahra Municipal Council* [1982] AC 158 described as 'the well-established tort of misfeasance by a public officer in the discharge of his public duties'.
>
> 38 The 5th edn of *De Smith, Woolf and Jowell's Judicial Review of Administrative Action* sets out the ingredients of the tort as follows:
>
> A public authority or person holding a public office may be liable for the tort of misfeasance in public office where:
>
> (1) There is an exercise or non-exercise of public power, whether common law, statutory or from some other source;
>
> (2) Which is either (a) affected by malice towards the plaintiff or (b) the decision maker knows is unlawful; and
>
> (3) The plaintiff is in consequence deprived of a benefit or suffers other loss.

[44] This tort has now been authoritatively defined by Lord Steyn in *Three Rivers DC v. Bank of England (No. 3)* [2003] 2 AC 1 and that pronouncement of the law was adopted and applied by Lau Bee Lan J in *Riga Sdn Bhd v. Awang Sepian Haji Awang Joini & 3 Ors* [2005] 1 LNS 251 wherein the learned judge in following the judgment of Lord Steyn summarised the elements of the tort of misfeasance in public office as follows:

(a) The defendant must be a public officer;

(b) The loss to the plaintiff must have been caused by the exercise of power by the defendant as a public officer; and

(c) The act of the public officer must fall either in the targeted malice limb of misfeasance where he acts with intent to harm the plaintiff or the illegality limb of misfeasance where he knows that the act is unlawful and that it will probably injure the plaintiff.

[45] Learned counsel for the plaintiff submits that pleadings giving rise to the cause of action for misfeasance in public office are essentially the same as those pleaded in support of the claim for conspiracy to injure. In this regard, I agree with submissions of counsel for the plaintiff that the deliberate abuse of power by a person holding a public office is tortious and it amounts to misfeasance in public office. Such a tortious act can arise when an officer actuated by malice, for example, by personal spite or a desire to injure for improper reasons, abuses his power. Having perused paras. 4, 5 and 8 of the statement of claim I find that they contain all the requisite elements of pleadings to support a claim for misfeasance in public office by a public officer.

(iii) The Tort Of Malicious Prosecution

[46] The essential elements of the tort of malicious prosecution that the plaintiff needs to plead and prove are:

(i) The defendants set the criminal law in motion against the plaintiff;

(ii) That the defendants did not have any reasonable or probable cause for setting the law in motion against the plaintiff;

(iii) That the defendants were actuated by malice in the sense that they had a motive other than to carry the law into effect;

(iv) That the proceedings terminated in the plaintiff's favour; and

(v) That the plaintiff had suffered damages.

(See *Rawther v. Abdul Kareem* [1966] 1 LNS 154; [1966] 2 MLJ 201 FC for the elements necessary to found a cause of action in malicious prosecution.)

[47] Learned counsel for the plaintiff submits that the pleadings on the tort of malicious prosecution are also complete, in that, the statement of claim, particularly in para. 6, shows that:

(i) The first to eighth defendants caused investigations to be commenced against the plaintiff and criminal charge to be brought against the plaintiff maliciously and without reasonable and probable cause;

(ii) The plaintiff was acquitted and discharged by the Sessions Court on 20 December 2010 without defence being called and an appeal was lodged at the High Court without any reasonable and probable cause and/or was filed with malice and/or initiated by ill-will or evil motive and/or with personal spite or acted recklessly or intentionally to injure the reputation and goodwill of the plaintiff;

(iii) The pending appeal at the High Court was used for a collateral purpose by the first and fifth defendants, ie, as a bargaining chip to induce the plaintiff to withdraw his civil suits against several public officials;

(iv) The proceedings finally terminated in the plaintiff's favour on 2 August 2012 after the appeal to the High Court was formally withdrawn by a Deputy Public Prosecutor of the MACC; and

(v) The plaintiff suffered loss and damages as a result.

[48] I agree with submissions of counsel of the plaintiff and further find that the pleadings have particularised the alleged malice, lack of reasonable and probable cause and abuse of prosecutorial powers including allegations of:

(i) Unlawfully issuing notices for disclosure under s. 32(1) of the Anti-Corruption Act 1997 against the plaintiff;

(ii) Embellishing the investigation papers, sensationalising and causing details of the investigations to be published in the mass media in breach of s. 21(4) of the Anti-Corruption Act 1997;

(iii) Preferring charges knowing well that the plaintiff was innocent and/or knowing well that there was insufficient evidence to support the charge;

(iv) Ignoring requests by the plaintiff to investigate the leakages of information to the media;

(v) Lodging appeals against the acquittal to the High Court for a collateral purpose knowing full well that the appeal was unmeritorious;

(vi) The third defendant acknowledging that there was no case against the plaintiff but that it was the first defendant who had insisted on the wrongful and unlawful prosecution of the plaintiff;

(vii) There was no reasonable grounds to believe that Dato' Ramli was guilty of an offence under the ACA Act;

(viii) The material relied on by the first, third, fourth, sixth, and eighth defendants were insufficient to warrant the plaintiff being labelled an "associate" of Dato' Ramli under the ACA Act;

(ix) The first, third, fourth, sixth, and/or eighth defendants failed, neglected and/or refused to take a statement from the plaintiff, which statement if taken would have allowed the plaintiff to explain his position to the defendants;

(x) Despite Dato' Ramli being acquitted earlier than the plaintiff the first, third, fourth and sixth defendants persisted with the wrongful prosecution of the plaintiff.

Further details of facts leading to the plaintiff's allegation of malicious and wrongful prosecution are found in para. 6.5 of the statement of claim.

[49] I am satisfied that the essential elements to found a cause of action in malicious prosecution has been sufficiently pleaded with particulars in the statement of claim, particularly in para. 6.1 to 6.10 and para. 7.12 thereof. The allegations of prosecutorial misconduct and abuse of prosecutorial discretion are but a part of the building blocks to found the tort of malicious prosecution for they go towards establishing the all-important element of malice or improper purpose. They are not necessarily separate causes of action.

(iv) The Tort Of Abuse Of Process

[50] The Court of Appeal in *Malaysian Building Society Bhd v. Tan Sri General Ungku Nazaruddin Ungku Mohamed* [1998] 2 CLJ 340 held that the essential elements to found a tort of abuse of process are:

A (a) The process complained of must have been initiated;

(b) The purpose of initiating that process must be some purpose other than to obtain genuine redress which the process offers, that is, the defendant used the legal process for a predominant
B purpose that is outside the ambit of the legal claim that the court is asked to adjudicate; and

(c) In consequence thereof, the plaintiff must have suffered some damage or injury.

C **[51]** Learned counsel for the plaintiff submits that there are sufficient pleadings in the statement of claim giving rise to the tort of abuse of process. Having perused the statement of claim, I find that the pleadings contain sufficient averments, which in my view, are sufficient for the tort of abuse of process, namely, that:

D

(i) The defendants initiated the process of investigation and prosecution of the plaintiff;

(ii) The predominant purpose of the investigations and prosecution was to injure the plaintiff and not to obtain genuine redress
E that the process offers; and

(iii) The plaintiff suffered loss or damage.

[52] Learned counsel for the defendants submits that the causes
F of action for false and malicious investigation, abuse of power, abuse of prosecutorial discretion and prosecutorial misconduct are not the subject of specific pleas in the statement of claim. Be that as it may, the complaints of abuse of prosecutorial discretion, prosecutorial misconduct, as well as false and malicious
G investigations fall under the general category of the tort of abuse of power or misfeasance in public office. Neill LJ in *Racz v. Home Office, Official Transcripts (1990-1997)* recognised and held that:

> The deliberate abuse of power by a person holding a public office is tortious. The tort is usually described as misfeasance in public
H office.

[53] In *Riga Sdn Bhd v. Awang Sepian Haji Awang Joini & 3 Ors* [2005] 1 LNS 251 the learned judge went on to explain the third ingredient of the tort of misfeasance in public office in the
I following words:

In respect of the third ingredient ((c) above), which concerns the state of mind of the defendant, in the case of targeted malice by a public officer ie, conduct specifically intended to injure a person or persons it involves bad faith in the sense of the exercise of public power for an improper or ulterior motive. The illegality limb operates where a public officer acts knowing that he has no power to do the act complained of and that the act will probably injure the plaintiff. It involves bad faith in as much as the public officer does not have an honest belief that his act is lawful, (per Lord Steyn at p. 8 para b-f).

An example of the targeted malice limb of the tort of public misfeasance is the case of *Roncarelli v. Duplessis* 16 DLR (2d) 689 where the respondent, Prime Minister and Attorney-General of Quebec deprived the appellant of his restaurant licence as an act of revenge for standing bail for members of the Jehovah's witnesses sect, against whose activities there had been a campaign. At p. 706 the Supreme Court of Canada held that:

> The act of the respondent through the instrumentality of the commission brought about a breach of an implied public statutory duty toward the appellant; it was a gross abuse of legal power expressly intended to punish him for an act wholly irrelevant to the statute, a punishment which inflicted on him, as it was intended to do, the destruction of his economic life as a restaurant keeper within the Province. Whatever may be the immunity of the commission or its member from an action for damages, there is none in the respondent. He was under no duty in relation to the appellant and his act was an intrusion upon the functions of a statutory body. The injury done by him was a fault engaging liability within the principles of the underlying public law of Quebec.

[54] Thus, the tort of deliberate abuse of power by a person holding public office and the tort of misfeasance in public office is one and the same. As such I do not see the necessity for there to be a specific plea in regards these complaints in the statement of claim. Suffice to say that, notwithstanding the imperfections in drafting complained of by counsel for the defendants, when the statement of claim is read as a whole, it discloses some cause of action and has raised some questions of law and of fact that are sufficiently arguable to justify proceeding to trial (see *Tractors Malaysia Bhd v. Tio Chee Hing* [1975] 1 LNS 133 PC).

[55] So long as there are some questions of law or issues raised in the pleadings that merits consideration, no matter how slight the chances of success, the court ought not to use its summary powers of dismissal and strike out the action (see *Saripah Manap & Ors v. Emar Sdn Bhd & Ors* [1997] 4 CLJ 194; *Pet Far Eastern (M) Sdn Bhd v. Tay Young Huat & Ors* [1999] 2 CLJ 886).

[56] In the circumstance, I am of the view that it is not appropriate to strike out the statement of claim under O. 18 r. 19(1)(a) of the ROC for the statement of claim clearly discloses several causes of action which on the facts pleaded are not inherently improbable or obviously unsustainable (see *Bandar Builder Sdn Bhd & Ors v. United Malayan Banking Corporation Bhd* [1993] 4 CLJ 7 SC).

(b) O. 18 r. 19(1)(b), (c) & (d) – Reference To Pleadings And Affidavits

I. Limitation Under s. 2(a) Of PAPA

[57] I will now move on to consider the defendants' application under the remaining three limbs, namely O. 18 r. 19(1)(b), (c) and (d) of the ROC, and determine the issues and arguments raised by the defendants by reference to the pleadings and the affidavits filed herein. The first issue canvassed by learned counsel for the defendants turns on the application of s. 2(a) of the Public Authorities Protection Act, 1948 ("PAPA"). The defendants' position is that all the claims pleaded in the statement of claim, with the exception of the plea of malicious prosecution, are barred by s. 2(a) of PAPA. While, learned counsel for the plaintiff, on the other hand argues that all the causes of action pleaded in the statement of claim are well within the statutory period provided for under s. 2(a) of PAPA.

[58] Section 2(a) of PAPA reads:

> Where, after the coming into force of this Act, any suit, action, prosecution or other proceeding is commenced in the Federation against any person for any act done in pursuance or execution or intended execution of any written law or of any public duty or authority or in respect of any alleged neglect or default in the execution of any such written law, duty or authority the following provisions shall have effect:

> (a) The suit, action, prosecution or proceeding shall not lie or be instituted unless it is commenced within 36 months next after the act neglect or default complained of or, in the case of a continuance of injury or damage, within 36 months next after the ceasing thereof.

[59] Learned counsel for the defendants submits that the suit was filed on 22 November 2013 and that the period of 36 months before filing of the suit takes us to 23 November 2010. Therefore, counsel argues that any cause of action that arose before 23 November 2010 would be time barred under s. 2(a) of PAPA. I accept the contention that pursuant to s. 2(a) of PAPA, any civil proceeding against the defendants shall not lie unless it is commenced within 36 months from the accrual of the cause of action.

[60] Now, it is trite that when the defence of limitation is raised, it is the plaintiff who bears the burden of proving that the action has been brought within the statutory period (see *Ong Ah Bee v. Hii Chung Siong, Robin* [1993] 1 CLJ 504).

[61] The determination of whether an action is time barred has two tiers (see *Ahmad Bin Hussin v. Hajjah Mek Binti Hussain* [1972] 1 LNS 3; [1973] 1 MLJ 18 FC). The first tier, is the determination of a question of law, that is, when did the plaintiff's cause of action accrue or arise. The answer to this question is all-important, as time would begin to run from the date of accrual of the cause of action. And when the cause of action arose would depend entirely on the nature of the particular cause of action. In *Lim Kean v. Choo Koon* [1969] 1 LNS 94; [1970] 1 MLJ 158, Yong J held that:

> A cause of action normally accrues when there is in existence a person who can sue and another who can be sued, and when all the facts have happened which are material to be proved to entitle the plaintiff to succeed. (See *Halsbury's Laws of England,* 3rd edn., pp. 193 and 194).
>
> In *Cooke v. Gill* (1873) LR 8 CP 107 116 Brett J defined "a cause of action" to mean "every fact which is material to be proved to entitle the plaintiff to succeed". This definition was approved by the Court of Appeal in *Read v. Brown* (1888) 22 QBD 128 131 in which Lord Esher MR in his grounds of judgment said that it included "every fact which it would be necessary for plaintiff to prove, if traversed, in order to support his right to the judgment of the court".

> After reviewing these and other authorities including *Barton v. North Staffordshire Rly Co* (1888) 38 Ch D 458 and *Welch v. Bank of England* [1955] Ch 508 544, *I have come to the conclusion that the period of limitation does not begin to run until there is a complete cause of action, and a cause of action is not complete when all the facts have not happened which are material to be proved to entitle the plaintiff to succeed.*
> (emphasis added)

The second tier, is essentially a question of fact to ascertain if the action was in fact commenced within the statutory period, taking into account the date of accrual of the action.

[62] There are several causes of action that the plaintiff has raised in the statement of claim. In order to ascertain if the plaintiff's action has been filed within time, I will deal with them separately.

[63] Learned counsel for the defendants submits that the starting point for the plea of conspiracy is para. 3.5 of the statement of claim and that the culmination of allegation in this paragraph is the issuance of the Rosli notices on 17 July 2007 and 16 August 2007. Counsel therefore argues that since the issuance of these Rosli notices were before the 36 months cut-off date on 23 November 2010, the action for conspiracy is statute barred under s. 2(a) of PAPA. Counsel for the defendants has advanced the same argument in respect of para. 3.6 and 3.8 of the statement of claim that refers to matters that transpired at the investigation stage prior to the plaintiff's arrest, which occurred on 11 October 2007, ie, more than 36 months before commencement of the suit.

[64] Similar arguments have advanced by counsel for the defendants in respect of the plea of misfeasance in public office. The argument of counsel for the defendants is that other than the plea of malicious prosecution, all the rest of the causes of action in the statement of claim are caught by statutory time bar under s. 2(a) of PAPA.

[65] The plaintiff's response to that argument is that the acts of the defendants falls within the second limb of PAPA, in that, the acts by the defendants against the plaintiff were continuing acts, culminating in the withdrawal of the appeal at the High Court on 2 August 2012. Therefore, counsel for the plaintiff argues that the institution of this action on 22 November 2013 is well within the time prescribed in s. 2(a) of PAPA.

[66] Counsel for the plaintiff relies on the principles established by the High Court in *Mak Koon Yong & Anor v. Municipal Councillors Malacca* [1967] 1 LNS 98; [1967] 1 MLJ 256 and *Ibrahim Mohideen Kutty v. Timbalan Menteri Dalam Negeri & Ors* [2003] 6 CLJ 144; [2003] 5 MLJ 294.

[67] In *Mak Koon Yong & Anor v. Municipal Councillors Malacca*, Wan Suleiman J (as he then was), in a claim for improper and *ultra vires* use of a local authority's discretionary power, held in respect of a plea of limitation under PAPA raised therein, that:

> The defendants argue that this suit is time-barred since s. 2(a) of the above Ordinance would apply. The relevant part of that section reads as follows:
>
> > 2. Where, after the coming into force of this Ordinance, any suit, action, prosecution or other proceeding is commenced in the Federation against any person for any act done in pursuance or execution or intended execution of any written law or of any public duty or authority or in respect of any alleged neglect or default in the execution of any such written law, duty or authority the following provisions shall have effect:
> >
> > (a) The suit, action, prosecution or proceeding shall not lie or be instituted unless it is commenced within 12 months next after the act, neglect or default complained of or, in the case of a continuance of injury or damage, within 12 month next after the ceasing thereof.
>
> In the case of *Carey Metropolitan Borough of Bermondsey* 20 TLR Court of Appeal held in respect of that section of the English Act which is in *pari materia* with our s. 2(a) that "the language of the section was reasonably plain and it was manifest that the continuance of the injury or damage meant the continuance of the act which caused the damage". Time would therefore begin to run for the purposes of the Ordinance, from the time when the act was caused, not from the time when the injury or damage ceased, or in the case of a continuing injury or damage, when the act causing the injury or damage ceased.
>
> For the defendants it was submitted that the time began to run from 23 December 1961, the day on which plaintiffs' architect was informed by the municipal engineer that the amended plan no. 9322 would not be approved. On behalf of the plaintiffs it was argued that time began to run only from 27 June 1962 when the municipal engineer approved the amended plan. Until then

there had been a continuation of the refusal, the act which they claim caused the damage. Since the writ was issued on 27 April 1963 plaintiffs contended that the suit had been commenced within time.

If the refusal to approve the amended plan, by the defendants was actionable, *it is my view that there had indeed been a continuation of the act, and that therefore the plaintiffs were correct in saying that the act causing damage ceased only from 27 June 1962. It would then follow that this suit is not time-barred* …
(emphasis added)

[68] Similarly, in *Ibrahim Mohideen Kutty v. Timbalan Menteri Dalam Negeri & Ors*, Low Hop Bing J (as he then was) held, in considering a plea of limitation under s. 2(a) of PAPA, that:

The limitation period under s. 2(a) as alluded to above has been specified in two separate limbs.

The first limb disallows the commencement of, eg, any suit or action in the Federation against any person for any act done in pursuance of any execution of any written law or of any public duty or authority or in respect of any alleged neglect or default in the execution of any such written law, duty or authority unless it is commenced within 36 months next after the act, neglect or default complained of.

In my considered view, 'the act, neglect or default complained of' contained in the first limb of s. 2(a) is confined to a single act, neglect or default which does not involve an element of continuance thereof and the single act *per se* is capable of constituting a complete cause of action, ie 'where there is in existence a person who can sue and another who can be sued and when all the facts have happened which are material to be proved to entitle the plaintiff to succeed', per Hashim Yeop A Sani CJ (Malaya) in *Credit Corporation (M) Bhd v. Fong Tak Sin* [1991] 1 MLJ 409 (SC).

…

In the case of a continuance of injury or damage, in the form of or by way of deprivation of fundamental liberty brought about by a detention order in the instant case which was stated to be for a duration of two years, ie, from 8 July 1998 to 8 July 2000, the second limb of s. 2(a) would apply, so that for the purposes of imposing the period of limitation, **time begins to run when the injury or damage ceases when the detention order expired** on 8 July 2000 or more specifically in the instant case when the plaintiff was released on 3 January 2000.

> *In my judgment, the first limb of s. 2(a) has no application to the facts of the instant case as the detention order was far from being a single act per se but, as alluded to above, was stated to be for a duration of two years. It is open to the plaintiff to seek reliance on the second limb of s. 2(a) which is couched in such a manner as to provide for the continuance of injury or damage by way of natural progression or effluxion of time, so that the remedy, if any, for any alleged injury or damage would be available and reckonable from the date of the cessation thereof.*
>
> *In the circumstances, I hold that the limitation period of 36 months under the second limb of s. 2(a) began to run from the date the injury or damage ceased,* ie, the date on which the plaintiff was released on 3 January 2000 and he is at liberty to file his suit or action against the first defendant within 36 months thereof, ie, on or before 3 January 2003.
> (emphasis added)

[69] Further, in *Ahmad Tajudin Ishak v. Suruhanjaya Pelabuhan Pulau Pinang* [1997] 2 CLJ 225; [1997] 1 MLJ 241, one of the issues raised at the appeal concerned the period of limitation under s. 2(a) of PAPA and whether the second limb would apply. Abdul Malek Ahmad JCA (later PCA) speaking for the Court of Appeal held that since the act, neglect or default complained of was of a continuing nature, limitation would only run 36 months after the ceasing of the act, neglect or default complained of.

[70] Here, the plaintiff complains of a conspiracy involving two or more of the individual defendants starting with the improper use of the powers under the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001 to gather plaintiff's financial information, then the issuance of the Rosli notices, leading on to the plaintiff's arrest at his office, the overnight detention in the MACC holding cell without bail, laying of the criminal charge at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court, the acquittal and discharge of the plaintiff at the close of the prosecution's case, the lodging of the appeal to the High Court, the negotiations by the fifth defendant with the plaintiff for a trade-off in the withdrawal of the High Court appeal in return for the plaintiff's discontinuance of several civil suits, and culminating with the withdrawal of the High Court appeal. The plaintiff's case is that the malicious and unlawful acts of the defendants continued with a series of acts until the High Court appeal was withdrawn on 2 August 2012. And it is not confined to a single act *per se*. In respect of the

pleas of misfeasance in public office, abuse of process and the rest of the causes of action, the counsel for the plaintiff puts forth the same argument, that is pursuant to the second limb of s. 2(a) of PAPA, time would start to run only upon the ceasing of the continuing wrongful acts of the first to the eighth defendants and the consequential ceasing of the injury and damage suffered by the plaintiff when the appeal was withdrawn at the High Court.

[71] In considering the pleaded facts and the case authorities cited above, I am of the considered view that from the pleadings, the alleged acts of the first to the eighth defendants were indeed continuing acts and the injury and damage caused to the plaintiff by the alleged acts of the first to the eighth defendants continued until the withdrawal of the High Court appeal on 2 August 2012. Therefore, the statutory limitation period of 36 months under the second limb of s. 2(a) of PAPA began to run from the date the injury or damage ceased, which is on 2 August 2012. And, as such, the commencement of this suit on 22 November 2013 is well within time.

[72] Further, as a rule the plaintiff could not have initiated any civil action against the defendants based on the facts pleaded in the statement of claim herein whilst the criminal proceedings, of which he complains as being malicious, has not come to a legal end; as otherwise conflict would arise between the civil and criminal justice systems on issues which properly belongs to the criminal court. Policy dictates that whilst a criminal charge was alive and subsisting, and criminal proceedings were afoot at the criminal court, it is only proper that the accused person is not afforded the opportunity to attack or scuttle the criminal prosecution by way of a rearguard civil action in the form of malicious prosecution, misfeasance in public office, abuse of process, abuse of power, conspiracy or any other civil causes of action. If the accused person is afforded such an opportunity, it would inevitably entail collateral litigation of issues which ought to be properly determined by the criminal court, without any concurrent proceedings in the civil courts. And for this very reason, the plaintiff could not have initiated civil proceedings against the defendants based on the facts pleaded herein as the issues were alive in the criminal proceedings in the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court. Any institution of civil proceedings whilst the criminal proceeding was pending or in progress would have been construed as an indirect and collateral challenge on the criminal

proceedings; and this, the courts would not allow. Therefore, the plaintiff can only avail himself of his civil remedies once the criminal charges have been determined with finality; and that occurred when the High Court appeal was withdrawn.

[73] Therefore, on the pleaded facts, I find that the filing of this suit on 22 November 2013 in respect of all the causes of action is well within the time stipulated in s. 2(a) of PAPA.

II. Absolute Prosecutorial Immunity

[74] Learned counsel for the defendants submits that the claim against the first defendant who is the Public Prosecutor and the fourth, fifth, and sixth defendants who are Deputy Public Prosecutors cannot be sustained as they enjoy absolute prosecutorial immunity. The argument of learned counsel for the defendants is that no civil action can be brought against the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth defendants in respect of their exercise of their prosecutorial discretion by any aggrieved person even if the action is based on allegations that the exercise of that discretion is not in accordance to law and/or is coloured or tainted by lack of good faith and/or that it was done due to personal spite and/or when there is abuse of the prosecutorial discretion, as is the allegation of the plaintiff in the statement of claim herein. In short, learned counsel for the defendants submits that the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth defendants enjoy absolute prosecutorial immunity in respect of their exercise prosecutorial discretion and power, no matter how and for what reason that discretion was exercised.

[75] Learned counsel for the plaintiff submits otherwise and states that the Public Prosecutor and his Deputies do not enjoy absolute prosecutorial immunity in the circumstance of the facts pleaded.

[76] A good starting point to determine this issue would be to look at constitutional principles. There is a separation of the prosecutorial and judicial function in the Federal Constitution and both are given equal status. As co-equals, it is generally accepted that one body may not interfere with the functions of the other, and in this regard the courts have consistently refused to subject the Attorney-General's exercise of prosecutorial discretion to judicial oversight, with the exception of the power of the court to prevent unconstitutional or unlawful exercise of prosecutorial power.

[77] A long line of case authorities have established that the Attorney General's exercise of prosecutorial discretion in respect of his decision to prosecute, or not to prosecute, or to discontinue prosecution, or his decision to amend a charge, or prefer a charge for a less serious offence when there is evidence of a more serious offence, is not justiciable or subject to judicial oversight. These decisions have been in the context of criminal proceedings *vis-à-vis* the Attorney-General's prosecutorial powers under art. 145(3) of the Federal Constitution and s. 376(i) of the Criminal Procedure Code (see *Long Samat & Ors v. PP* [1974] 1 LNS 80; [1974] 2 MLJ 152 (FC) and *Johnson Tan Han Seng v. PP & Other Appeals* [1977] 1 LNS 38; [1977] 2 MLJ 66 (FC)).

[78] These case authorities, however, do not deal with the question of prosecutorial immunity. Therefore, the question of whether the principle of absolute prosecutorial discretion translates to absolute prosecutorial immunity was never dealt with in these cases. More importantly, the question of whether the Public Prosecutor can be open to civil liability in respect of claims of abuse of prosecutorial power, malicious prosecution, or misfeasance in public office, when the prosecutorial discretion had been exercised with malice or for improper purpose were not dealt with in these cases. These are the questions that this court would have to now answer.

[79] Lord Diplock in giving the advice of the Privy Council in *Teh Cheng Poh v. PP* [1978] 1 LNS 202; [1979] 1 MLJ 50 had alluded to the fact that the exercise of prosecutorial discretion can be questioned when it had been exercised unlawfully or based on irrelevant consideration. Lord Diplock gave the following advise of the board:

> Under the common law system of administration of criminal justice a prosecuting authority has a discretion whether to institute proceedings at all and, if so, with what offence to charge the accused. Such a discretion is conferred upon the Attorney General of Malaysia by art 145(3) of the Constitution, *viz*:
>
> > The Attorney-General shall have power, exercisable at his discretion, to institute, conduct or discontinue any proceedings for an offence, other than proceedings before a Muslim court, a native court or a court-martial.

> There are many factors which a prosecuting authority may properly take into account in exercising its discretion as to whether to charge a person at all, or, where the information available to it discloses the ingredients of a greater as well as a lesser offence, as to whether to charge the accused with the greater or the lesser. The existence of those factors to which the prosecuting authority may properly have regard and the relative weight to be attached to each of them may vary enormously between one case and another. All that equality before the law requires, is that the cases of all potential defendants to criminal charges shall be given unbiased consideration by the prosecuting authority and *that decisions whether or not to prosecute in a particular case for a particular offence should not be dictated by some irrelevant consideration.*
>
> If indeed the Attorney-General was possessed of a discretion to choose between prosecuting the appellant for an offence against s. 57(1) of the Internal Security Act, 1964, or for an offence under the Arms Act, 1960, and the Firearms (Increased Penalties) Act, 1971, **there is no material on which to found an argument that in the instant case he exercised it unlawfully**. (emphasis added)

[80] In that *dictum* of Lord Diplock, there is tacit acknowledgement that though prosecutorial authority is constitutionally vested in the Attorney-General, the prosecutorial discretion must be exercised for its proper constitutional purpose and not for some unlawful or improper purpose. And that proper constitutional purpose is to uphold the rule of law by enforcing criminal law, as well as maintaining law and order for the greater good of society. Now, if the Attorney-General as the custodian of prosecutorial power exercises his prosecutorial discretion for other than its constitutional purpose or exercises it based on some irrelevant consideration or exercises his discretion unlawfully or the prosecutorial power is abused for some improper purpose, then that decision can become justiciable and the courts have a duty to render assistance to an individual who has been aggrieved by that decision.

[81] This is in keeping with the pronouncement of Raja Azlan Shah CJM (as HRH then was) in *Pengarah Tanah dan Galian, Wilayah Persekutuan v. Sri Lempah Enterprise Sdn Bhd* [1978] 1 LNS 143; [1979] 1 MLJ 135 that:

> Unfettered discretion is a contradiction in terms. My understanding of the authorities in these cases, and in particular the case of Pyx Granite (ante) (*Pyx Granite Co Ltd v. Ministry of Housing and Local*

A *Government* [1958] 1 All ER 625) and its progeny compel me to reject it and to uphold the decision of the learned judge. It does not seem to be realised that this argument is fallacious. Every legal power must have legal limits, otherwise there is dictatorship. In particular, **it is a stringent requirement that a discretion should be exercised for a proper purpose,** and that it should not be exercised unreasonably. *In other words, every discretion cannot be free from legal restraint; where it is wrongly exercised, it becomes the duty of the courts to intervene.* The courts are the only defence of the liberty of the subject against departmental aggression. In these days when government departments and public authorities have such great powers and influence, this is a most important safeguard for the ordinary citizen: so that the courts can see that these great powers and influence are exercised in accordance with law. I would once again emphasise what has often been said before, that "public bodies must be compelled to observe the law and it is essential that bureaucracy should be kept in its place", (per Danckwerts LJ in *Bradbury v. London Borough of Enfield* [1967] 3 All ER 434, 442.)
(emphasis added)

[82] Further in *Savrimuthu Sinnapan v. Public Prosecutor* [1987] 1 CLJ 368 Salleh Abas LP speaking for the Federal Court held that:

... public interest, reason, and sense of justice demand that any statutory power must be exercised reasonably and with due consideration.

[83] Similar sentiments were echoed by Gopal Sri Ram JCA (later FCJ) in *Kerajaan Negeri Selangor & Ors v. Sagong Tasi & Ors* [2005] 4 CLJ 169 wherein the learned judge held:

In a system of Parliamentary democracy modelled along Westminster lines, it is Parliament which is made up of the representatives of the people that entrusts power to a public body. It does this through the process of legislation. The donee of the power – the public body – may be a Minister of the Crown or any other public authority. The power is accordingly held in trust for the people who are, through Parliament, the ultimate donors of the power. *It follows that every public authority is in fact a fiduciary of the power it wields. Sometimes the power conferred is meant to be exercised for the benefit of a section or class of the general public, as is the case here. At other times it is to be exercised for the general good of the nation as a whole, that it to say, in the public interest. But it is never meant to be misused or abused. And when that happens, the courts will intervene in the discharge of their constitutional duty.*
(emphasis added)

So, in *Premachandra v. Major Montague Jayawickrema* [1994] 2 Sri LR 90, at p. 105, GPS De Silva CJ when delivering the judgment of the Supreme Court of Sri Lanka said:

> There are no absolute or unfettered discretions in public law; **discretions are conferred on public functionaries in trust for the public**, to be used for the public good, and *the propriety of the exercise of such discretions is to be judged by reference to the purposes for which they were so entrusted.* (emphasis added)

In the course of his judgment the learned Chief Justice referred to the following passage extracted from *Administrative Law* by HWR Wade (5th edn.):

> Statutory power conferred for public purposes is conferred as it were upon trust, not absolutely – that is to say, it can validly be used only in the right and proper way which Parliament when conferring it is presumed to have intended. Although the Crown's lawyers have argued in numerous cases that unrestricted permissive language confers unfettered discretion, the truth is that, in a system based on the rule of law, unfettered governmental discretion is a contradiction in terms.

[84] These are strong pronouncements of the law by some of our most prominent jurists. The legal reasoning against unfettered exercise of discretion or power by public officials enunciated in these cases are most compelling and I am bound by the doctrine of *stare decisis* to apply these principles to the facts of the pleaded case herein and to determine whether the Attorney-General and his deputies enjoy absolute prosecutorial immunity or whether the immunity can be lifted in appropriate circumstance.

[85] The Singapore Court of Appeal had the occasion to deliberate and decide on the issue of prosecutorial discretion and immunity in *Law Society of Singapore v. Tan Guan Huat Neo Phyllis* [2007] SGHC 207; [2008] 2 SLR 239 and Chan Sek Keong CJ, in delivering his landmark judgment held that:

> We have in the preceding paragraphs (see [132] and [138] above) defined an abuse of the criminal process to mean the use of that process for a purpose for which it is not intended, ie, to prosecute an offender for some other ulterior motive and not to punish him for an offence which he has committed. If the Attorney-General initiates such a prosecution, he also abuses his prosecutorial power.

A …

Nonetheless, *the courts are not powerless under the law to check or act against an abuse or unconstitutional exercise of prosecutorial power.* Under the law, the Attorney-General must act according to law, as his prosecutorial power is not unfettered. As we have earlier
B stated, there are two aspects to this. First, he may not use his prosecutorial power in bad faith for an extraneous purpose. Second, he may not use it so as to contravene constitutional rights, such as the right to equality before the law and the equal protection of the law.

C …

The discretionary power to prosecute under the Constitution is not absolute. It must be exercised in good faith for the purpose it is intended, ie, to convict and punish offenders, and not for an extraneous purpose.
D As the Court of Appeal said in *Chng Suan Tze v. Minister of Home Affairs* [1988] SLR 132 at 156, [86], all legal powers, even a constitutional power, have legal limits. *The notion of a subjective or unfettered discretion is contrary to the rule of law. In our view, the exercise of the prosecutorial discretion is subject to judicial review in two situations: first, where the prosecutorial power is abused, ie, where it is*
E *exercised in bad faith for an extraneous purpose, and second, where its exercise contravenes constitutional protections and rights (for example, a discriminatory prosecution which results in an accused being deprived of his right to equality under the law and the equal protection of the law under Art 12 of the Constitution). Authority for this proposition may be*
F *found in Teh Cheng Poh v. PP [1979] 1 MLJ 50 ("Teh Cheng Poh"). In that case, although the Privy Council recognised that the unconstitutional exercise of prosecutorial discretion could be challenged, it held that there was no material on the facts of that case on which to found an argument that the Attorney-General had exercised his discretion unlawfully. Teh Cheng Poh* has been followed by the
G Court of Appeal in two cases, *viz*, *Sim Min Teck v. PP* [1987] SLR 30 and *Thiruselvam s/o Nagaratnam v. PP* [2001] 2 SLR 125. (emphasis added)

[86] The learned Chief Justice (who was a former Attorney-
H General), in echoing the sentiments of HRH Raja Azlan Shah, has very succinctly put that "the notion of a subjective or unfettered discretion is contrary to the rule of law" and had stated that the prosecutorial discretion of the Attorney-General is not unfettered and in appropriate cases, where the exercise of that discretion is
I unconstitutional, or done in bad faith for an extraneous purpose, or when power is abused, the courts can intervene and redress

that wrong. Based on the reasons stated by the learned Chief Justice, I hold that, that is also the position of law in Malaysia in respect of the Attorney-General's prosecutorial discretion and immunity. It is worth noting that the constitutional powers of the Attorney-General in Singapore and Malaysia are in *pari materia*, and the relevant provision in the Singapore Constitution is found in art. 35(8), which reads:

> The Attorney-General shall have power, exercisable at his discretion, to initiate, conduct or discontinue any proceedings for any offence.

[87] In recent years, there have been similar pronouncements of the law in other common law jurisdictions in respect of prosecutorial immunity. The Supreme Court of Canada in the case of *Nelles v. Ontario* [1989] SCJ No. 86 had occasion to consider the issue of absolute prosecutorial immunity from suits for malicious prosecution against the Attorney-General and Crown Attorneys and held that the Attorney-General and Crown Attorneys did not enjoy absolute immunity for malicious prosecution.

[88] In coming to the decision that it did, the Canadian Supreme Court considered various arguments forwarded in favour of and against absolute prosecutorial immunity for the Attorney-General and Crown Attorneys; and these arguments, as well as the positions taken by the court of first instance, Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court in *Nelles v. Ontario* are well set out in the judgment of RBT Goepel J in *Henry v. British Columbia (Attorney General)* [2012] BCJ No. 1965, 2012 BCSC 1401 and I quote:

> C. The *Nelles* Decision
>
> 17 Ms Nelles was a nurse at the Toronto Hospital for Sick Children. She was charged with the murder of four infant patients. After the case against her was dismissed at a preliminary hearing upon a finding of the absence of evidence, she commenced an action against various parties including the Crown Attorneys involved in her prosecution. The claim against the Crown Attorneys alleged negligence and, in the alternative, malicious prosecution and false imprisonment.
>
> 18 Before trial, the Crown Attorneys moved to have the action against them dismissed on the grounds the pleadings disclosed no reasonable cause of action. The question of law put before the court was in these terms:

A defendant in a preliminary inquiry held under the provisions of the Criminal Code of Canada and discharged thereof has no cause of action based in malicious prosecution or negligence against the Crown Attorneys conducting such proceedings or against those in law responsible for their conduct.

19 In the first instance, Fitzpatrick J of the Supreme Court of Ontario allowed the motion and struck out the statement of claim. He held that the Attorney-General for Ontario has an absolute immunity from civil actions while performing his duties as a public prosecutor, even if he acted maliciously.

20 In the Ontario Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada, the submissions were limited to the question of whether the claim for malicious prosecution could be maintained. The Ontario Court of Appeal, in reasons reported at (1985), 51 OR (2d) 513, 21 DLR (4th) 103, held that prosecutors acting within the bounds of their authority enjoyed an absolute immunity from civil suit for their conduct in initiating and conducting criminal prosecutions. In reaching that decision, it relied extensively on the decision of the United States Supreme Court in *Imbler v. Pachtman*, 424 US 409 (1976) (*Imbler*). While the court of Appeal found the idea of an absolute immunity "troubling", it determined that it was justified by the following policy concerns. First, the rule encourages public trust in the fairness and impartiality of those who act and exercise discretion in the bringing and conducting of criminal prosecution; the rule is designed for the benefit of the public not the benefit of the individual prosecutor. Second, the threat of personal liability for tortious conduct would have a chilling effect on the prosecutor's exercise of discretion, and third, to permit civil suits against prosecutors would invite a flood of litigation that would deflect a prosecutor's energies from the discharge of his public duties. In short, the absence of an absolute immunity would open the door to unmeritorious claims and would be a threat to prosecutorial independence.

21 The question facing the Supreme Court of Canada in *Nelles* was whether, and to what extent, *Imbler* should be followed in Canada. The lead judgment was written by Lamer J (as he then was). In his reasons, he recognized there was merit in the policy concerns identified in *Imbler* and in the Court of Appeal decision but held that there were countervailing policy reasons that mitigated against absolute immunity. In particular, he noted that absolute immunity for prosecutors would prevent a wrongdoer from being held accountable by a victim and would effectively bar the seeking of a remedy under s. 24(1) of the Charter. He

dismissed concerns that anything less than absolute immunity would have a "chilling effect" on a prosecutor's exercise of discretion. He noted that in cases of malicious prosecution a plaintiff would have to prove both the absence of reasonable and probable cause in commencing the prosecution and malice in the form of deliberate and improper use of office. Such cases would not be dealing with second guessing a prosecutor's judgment but rather with "the deliberate and malicious use of office for ends that are improper and inconsistent with the traditional prosecutorial function": *Nelles* at pp. 196 to 197.

22 He concluded his analysis at pp. 199 to 200:

> A review of the authorities on the issue of prosecutorial immunity reveals that the matter ultimately boils down to a question of policy. For the reasons I have stated above I am of the view that absolute immunity for the Attorney-General and his agents, the Crown Attorneys, is not justified in the interests of public policy. We must be mindful that an absolute immunity has the effect of negating a private right of action and in some cases may bar a remedy under the Charter. As such, the existence of absolute immunity is a threat to the individual rights of citizens who have been wrongly and maliciously prosecuted. Further, it is important to note that what we are dealing with here is an immunity from suit for malicious prosecution; we are not dealing with errors in judgment or discretion or even professional negligence. By contrast the tort of malicious prosecution requires proof of an improper purpose or motive, a motive that involves an abuse or perversion of the system of criminal justice for ends it was not designed to serve and as such incorporates an abuse of the office of the Attorney-General and his agents the Crown Attorneys.
>
> There is no doubt that the policy considerations in favour of absolute immunity have some merit. But in my view those considerations must give way to the right of a private citizen to seek a remedy when the prosecutor acts maliciously in fraud of his duties with the result that he causes damage to the victim. In my view the inherent difficulty in proving a case of malicious prosecution combined with the mechanisms available within the system of civil procedure to weed out meritless claims is sufficient to ensure that the Attorney-General and Crown Attorneys will not be hindered in the proper execution of their important public duties. Attempts to qualify prosecutorial

> immunity in the United States by the so-called functional approach and its many variations have proven to be unsuccessful and unprincipled as I have previously noted. *As a result I conclude that the Attorney-General and Crown Attorneys do not enjoy an absolute immunity for malicious prosecution*.
> (emphasis added)

[89] Since the decision in *Nelles v. Ontario*, the Supreme Court of Canada had occasion to revisit the issue of prosecutorial immunity and the principles enunciated in *Nelles v. Ontario* in two subsequent cases, namely, *Proulx v. Quebec (Attorney-General)* [2001] SCC 66, [2001] 3 SCR 9 and *Miazga v. Kvello Estate and Others* [2009] SCC 51. In both cases the Supreme Court of Canada had applied and reaffirmed the principles enunciated in *Nelles v. Ontario*. In *Proulx v. Quebec (Attorney-General)*, the court held that:

> Under our criminal justice system, prosecutors are vested with extensive discretion and decision-making authority to carry out their functions. Given the importance of this role to the administration of justice, courts should be very slow indeed to second-guess a prosecutor's judgment calls when assessing Crown liability for prosecutorial misconduct. *Nelles v. Ontario, [1989] 2 SCR 170, affirmed unequivocally the public interest in setting the threshold for such liability very high, so as to deter all but the most serious claims against the prosecuting authorities, and to ensure that Crown liability is engaged in only the most exceptional circumstances. Against these vital considerations is the principle that the Ministry of the Attorney-General and its prosecutors are not above the law and must be held accountable. Individuals caught up in the justice system must be protected from abuses of power. In part, this accountability is achieved through the availability of a civil action for malicious prosecution*.
> (emphasis added)

And in the case of *Miazga v. Kvello Estate and Others* the Canadian Supreme Court specifically held that:

> It is readily apparent from its constituent elements that the tort of malicious prosecution targets the decision to initiate or continue with a criminal prosecution. When taken by a Crown prosecutor, this decision is one of the 'core elements' of prosecutorial discretion, thus lying 'beyond the legitimate reach of the court' under the constitutionally entrenched principle of independence: *Krieger v. Law Society of Alberta* 2002 SCC 65, [2003] 3 LRC 249 at (32), (46). *The principle of Crown independence means that*

> *decisions taken by a Crown Attorney pursuant to his or her prosecutorial discretion are generally immune from judicial review under principles of public law, subject only to the strict application of the doctrine of abuse of process.*
>
> *Just as immunity from judicial review is subject to the doctrine of abuse of process in public law, the Attorney-General and Crown Attorneys do not enjoy absolute immunity from a suit for malicious prosecution in private law. A person accused of a criminal offence enjoys a private right of action when a prosecutor acts maliciously in fraud of his or her prosecutorial duties with the result that the accused suffers damage.*
>
> However, the civil tort of malicious prosecution is not an after-the-fact judicial review of a Crown's exercise of prosecutorial discretion. Under the strict standard established in *Nelles*, malicious prosecution will only be made out where there is proof that the prosecutor's conduct was fuelled by 'an improper purpose or motive, a motive that involves an abuse or perversion of the system of criminal justice for ends it was not designed to serve' (see [1989] 2 SCR 170 at 199). In other words, it is only when a Crown prosecutor steps out of his or her role as 'minister of justice' that immunity is no longer justified.
> (emphasis added)

[90] The position in England, *vis-à-vis* prosecutorial immunity, is not too dissimilar to that which had evolved in Canada. In *Riches v. Director of Public Prosecutions* [1973] 2 All ER 935 CA, in striking out a claim for malicious prosecution against the Director of Public Prosecutions on the grounds of time-bar, Stephenson LJ did not rule out the possibility of an acquitted person succeeding on a claim for malicious prosecution against the prosecutor when the claimant is able to establish malice and lack of reasonable and probable cause for the prosecution. This is tacit acknowledgement that the Public Prosecutor does not enjoy absolute prosecutorial immunity. This is the observation made by Stephenson LJ:

> I do not wish to be taken as saying that there may never be a case where a prosecution has been initiated and pursued by the Director of Public Prosecutions in which it would be impossible for an acquitted defendant to succeed in an action for malicious prosecution, or as saying that the existence of the Attorney-General's fiat where required conclusively negates the existence of malice and conclusively proves that there was reasonable and probable cause for the prosecution. There may be cases where there has been, by even a responsible authority, the suppression of evidence which has led to a false view being taken by those who carried on a prosecution and by those who ultimately convicted.

[91] Even though learned counsel for the defendants had during oral submissions advanced the argument of absolute prosecutorial immunity for the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth defendants, in his written submissions, counsel concedes that the English position as stated by Stephenson LJ in *Riches v. DPP* [1973] 2 All ER 935, when analysed, appears to leave the door open for malicious prosecution suits against the Director of Public Prosecutions and his officers where there is suppression of evidence. If that were so, then surely, such a cause of action would be available in circumstances of the facts alleged by the plaintiff in the statement of claim herein.

[92] Further in *Elguzouli-Daf v. Commissioner of Police and Another* [1995] QB 335, the plaintiffs were arrested, charged and detained for serious offences, but after some period of detention, the proceedings against them were discontinued by the Crown Prosecution Service ("CPS"). The plaintiffs then brought civil proceedings against, *inter alia*, the CPS for negligence. Though the claim was for negligence and the issue was whether the CPS owed a duty of care to the claimants, Lord Steyn LJ in delivering the main judgment of the Court of Appeal, by way of a strong *obiter*, made reference to the operation of the tort of misfeasance in a public office in the context of the facts of that case and held that:

> ... there is the possibility of judicial review of decisions by the CPS. Given the nature of prosecution process it is, however, right to say that the scope for such judicial review proceedings is very limited indeed: *Wiseman v. Borneman* [1971] AC 297, 308; *Nicol v. Attorney-General for the State of Victoria* [1982] VR 353; *Dickens, "The Attorney-General's Consent to Prosecutions"* (1972) 35 MLR 347. **Turning to private law remedies there is first of all the tort of malicious prosecution.** In order to succeed in such an action the plaintiff must prove that the prosecution failed, that there was no reasonable or probable cause for the prosecution and that the defendant was actuated by malice. **It is also necessary to consider the tort of misfeasance in public office.** The essence of the tort is the abuse of public office. Potentially such liability might attach to a decision of a CPS prosecutor. But, as the law stands, the plaintiff has to establish either that the holder of the public office maliciously acted to the plaintiff's detriment or that he acted knowing that he did not possess the relevant power. That is the effect of the decision of the Court of Appeal in *Bourgoin SA v. Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food* [1986] QB 716. In this corner of the law our legal system possibly has a capacity for further development, notably under the direct or

> indirect influence of the jurisprudence of the European Court of Justice: see *Francovich v. Republic of Italy (Joined Cases C-6/90 and C-9/90)* [1995] ICR 722 and *Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council v. Wickes Building Supplies Ltd* [1993] AC 227, 281-282, per Lord Goff of Chieveley. But it would be wrong to say more in this case about this complex area of the law. *By way of summary, one can say that as the law stands a citizen, who is aggrieved by a prosecutor's decision, has in our system potentially extensive private law remedies for a deliberate abuse of power.*
> (emphasis added)

[93] Once again there is clear affirmation by the English Court of Appeal of the principle that the Public Prosecutor does not enjoy absolute prosecutorial immunity and a person "who is aggrieved by a prosecutor's decision, has in our system potentially extensive private law remedies for a deliberate abuse of power". And that would include a claim for malicious prosecution and misfeasance in public office.

[94] And subsequently, in *Bennett v. Commissioner Of Police Of The Metropolis And Another* (1997) Times, 24 October, it is reported that Sir Richard Scott, Vice-Chancellor, had held that:

> **Neither the police nor the CPS was entitled to a blanket immunity.** They were liable for malicious arrest and malicious prosecution and for assault if excessive force was used in the course of an arrest.
>
> His Lordship could not therefore see why they should be immune from the tort of misfeasance in public office if the requisite ingredients of the tort were pleaded and made out. *They were subject to the rule of law like anyone else. It was not in the public interest that they should not be.*
> (emphasis added)

[95] Indeed, when the judicial pronouncements in these string of cases are analysed, it reveals a common thread confirming the proposition that though the Public Prosecutor is ordinarily clothed with prosecutorial immunity, in exceptional circumstance where the prosecutor's "conduct was fuelled by an improper purpose or motive, a motive that involves an abuse or perversion of the system of criminal justice for ends it was not designed to serve" or where the prosecutor steps out of his constitutional role that "immunity is no longer justified", civil action can lie against the Public Prosecutor.

[96] In fact the Supreme Court of India in *Common Cause, A Registered Society v. Union of India* AIR 1996 SC 3538 had opined that "no public servant can arrogate to himself the power to act in a manner which is arbitrary" and that "public servants should be held personally liable for their *mala fide* acts". In coming to that opinion, the court held that:

> It is high time that the public servants should be held personally responsible for their *mala fide* acts in the discharge of their functions as public servants … Public servants may be liable in damages for malicious, deliberate or injurious wrong-doing. According to Wade "There is, thus, a tort which has been called misfeasance in public office and which includes malicious abuse of power, deliberate maladministration, and perhaps also other unlawful acts causing injury ... if a public servant abuses his office ... an action may be maintained against such public servant. No public servant can say "you may set aside an order on the ground of *mala fide* but you cannot hold me personally liable". No public servant can arrogate to himself the power to act in a manner which is arbitrary.

[97] These case authorities, both local and from foreign common law jurisdictions, further show that the notion of unfettered exercise of power or discretion by public officials is not consonant with the rule of law and there is a clear move to make public officers accountable for their action, for it is generally accepted that accountability promotes the rule of law. In this regard, the notion of absolute prosecutorial immunity for the Public Prosecutor and his Deputies, who are public officers, is anathema to the modern day notions of accountability and the rule of law. This is in keeping with developments in modern jurisprudence, as can be seen from the cases cited above, that absolute immunity for public officials has no place in a progressive democratic society and is contrary to the rule of law. It must be gain said that in a legal system where the rule of law is central, no one is above the law.

[98] On the pleadings, there are allegations of malice in the form of abuse of prosecutorial power and improper exercise of prosecutorial discretion for an improper purpose. At this stage of the proceedings, it is not for me to decide whether these allegations are true. Suffice to say that these allegations stand uncontroverted at the moment and the court's role at this point in time is to ascertain if, in the event the facts as alleged are

proved by the plaintiff at trial, the reliefs sought can flow from the pleaded causes of action. The case authorities cited above have unequivocally held that public officers, including the Public Prosecutor and his deputies, can be held liable in damages for malicious, deliberate or injurious wrongdoing. In the premise, having considered the facts pleaded, I am of the view that there are reasonable causes of action disclosed in the pleadings that merit a trial.

[99] My view in this regard is further fortified by the statutory immunity provisions found in various statutes. The first, fourth, fifth, and sixth defendants maintain that their respective role as the Public Prosecutor and Deputy Public Prosecutors clothes them with absolute immunity from any action, suit or prosecution. There is, however, no general statutory immunity granted to the Public Prosecutor or his Deputies. But, there are some statutory provisions that limit liability for public servants and the government, notably in s. 6 of the Government Proceedings Act, 1956 and s. 72 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Act 2009. However, these provisions are nowhere near the absolute immunity contended by the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth defendants.

[100] It is would be useful to take a look at the immunity provisions under s. 72 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Act, 2009, which reads:

> No action, suit, prosecution or other proceedings whatsoever shall lie or be brought, instituted, or maintained in any court or before any other authority against:
>
> (a) The Government of Malaysia;
>
> (b) Any officer or employee of the Government of Malaysia or of the Commission;
>
> (c) Any member of the Advisory Board or the Special Committee or any other committee established under or for the purposes of this Act; or
>
> (d) Any person lawfully acting on behalf of the Government of Malaysia, Commission, officer or employee of the Government of Malaysia or Commission,
>
> for or on account of, or in respect of, any act done or statement made or omitted to be done or made, or purporting to be done or made or omitted to be done or made, in pursuance or in

A execution of, or intended pursuance or execution of this Act, or any order in writing, direction, instruction, notice or other thing whatsoever issued under this Act:

> Provided that such act or such statement was done or made, or was omitted to be done or made, in good faith.

B

[101] The proviso to s. 72 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Act, 2009, makes it abundantly clear that immunity against actions, suits or prosecution is only available when the act complained of was done in good faith. There is no blanket immunity. A similar C immunity provision is found in s. 77 of the Anti-Money Laundering and Anti-Terrorism Financing Act 2001, and here too, there is a similar proviso to the effect that the immunity afforded is subject to the requirement of good faith in the exercise of the powers in that statute by any public officer.

D

[102] This is analogous to judicial immunity granted to judges or persons acting in a judicial capacity under s. 14 of the Courts of Judicature Act 1964, where the immunity is not absolute and is subject to the requirement that the judge in good faith believed E himself to have jurisdiction to do or order the act complained of. In this regard, it would be apposite to look at s. 14(1) of the Courts of Judicature Act, 1964, which reads:

> No judge or other person acting judicially shall be liable to be sued in any civil court for any act done or ordered to be done F by him in the discharge of his judicial duty, whether or not within the limits of his jurisdiction, nor shall any order for costs be made against him, provided that he at the time in good faith believed himself to have jurisdiction to do or order the act complained of.

G **[103]** Therefore, judicial immunity would only be available when the judge or the judicial officer, had acted in good faith and believed himself to have jurisdiction to carry out the act or make the impugned order (see *Penolong Kanan Pendaftar Mahkamah Tinggi Johor Bahru v. Tan Beng Sooi* [1997] 2 CLJ 409 and *Thilagavathy Durairajoo v. Penolong Kanan Pendaftar* [2002] 1 LNS H 148 for the proposition that the shield of judicial immunity is not absolute but can be pierced when the judicial officer had acted *mala fides*, *ultra vires* or without jurisdiction).

[104] The term "good faith" (in the context of the immunity I provisions under the Emergency Ordinance) was judicially considered by Syed Agil Barakbah J (later FCJ) in *E Gopal & Anor*

v. Awang Mona [1976] 1 LNS 23; [1978] 1 MLJ 251. In that case the issue was whether the public officer concerned could claim protection under s. 5 of the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance, 1969, in respect of an order that he had made. The learned judge held that:

> ... section 5 is intended to protect any public officer from any suit, prosecution or any legal proceeding in any court for any act ordered or done by him either personally or in his official capacity, during the emergency period for the purpose of maintaining order or public security or for carrying into effect any regulation, order, rule, by-law, direction or notice issued under the Ordinance, provided that his act was done *in good faith and in reasonable belief that it was necessary for the purpose to be served thereby*. (emphasis added)

[105] Again, in relation to the Emergency Ordinance, even during the emergency, immunity from prosecution or legal proceeding granted to a public officer was subject to the requirement of the act having been done in good faith and the learned judge held that the term "good faith" in the context of that statute:

> ... includes due inquiry and implies not only an upright mental attitude but also clear conscience and that ordinary prudence has been exercised according to the standard of a reasonable person.

[106] So, it can be quite clearly seen that whenever the legislature provided for statutory immunity from legal proceedings for public officers, it has always come with a rider, and that rider was the requirement of good faith in the exercise of that public officer's powers or discretion. The shield was never an absolute one.

[107] At this stage of the proceedings, the court is only concerned with whether facts are pleaded with sufficient particulars to give rise to such remedies and it would then have to go to trial for the plaintiff to establish his case. Therefore, I am unable to accept the defendants counsel's contention that the claim against the first, third and fourth defendants are unsustainable by reason of absolute prosecutorial immunity.

III. The Misjoinder Of The Ninth And Tenth Defendants

[108] I agree with submissions of counsel for the defendants that the ninth defendant is not a legal entity and under the relevant provisions of the Police Act, the action would have to be brought

against the Inspector General of Police and not Polis Diraja Malaysia. However, counsel for the plaintiff submits that it is well settled that when any claim can be saved by an amendment, it should not be summarily struck out. I agree with that proposition (see *Metroplex Holdings Sdn Bhd v. Commerce International Merchant Bankers Bhd* [2013] 8 CLJ 329). Further, O. 15 r. 6 of the Rules of Court 2012 provides that a cause or matter shall not be defeated by reason of the misjoinder or non-joinder of any party, and that the court may on such terms as it thinks just and either of its own motion or on application order any person who has been improperly or unnecessarily made a party to cease to be a party and/or be substituted with the correct party. The plaintiff's counsel submits, that the plaintiff is ready to amend the writ and statement of claim to substitute the Inspector General of Police in place of Polis Diraja Malaysia as the ninth defendant. Therefore, I do not see the necessity to strike out the claim against the ninth defendant when such an amendment would cure the defect.

[109] In respect of the tenth defendant, the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), though at the material time, the tenth defendant was not in existence, its predecessor the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) was and the acts complained of against some of the defendants were done in their capacity as officers of the ACA. I find that by virtue of s. 74 of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission Act 2009, any act done or action taken by the ACA or an officer of the ACA shall deemed to have been continued by the MACC, the tenth defendant herein. Therefore, I agree with submissions of counsel for the plaintiff that the tenth defendant as the successor of the ACA is on the facts pleaded the proper party to be brought in as a defendant in this action.

Lack Of Plea Of Defamation

[110] Counsel for defendants also argues that the pleas in paras. 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.3 and 9.3, in so far as they make claim for loss of reputation and damage to character, do not demonstrate a reasonable cause of action and ought to struck out. Counsel submits that a claim for defamation is the only means by which a plaintiff may seek compensation for damage to reputation and in this regard refers to the House of Lords decision in *Spring v. Guardian Assurance PLC and Others* [1994] 3 All ER 129 where

Lord Goff of Chieveley accepted the opinion of Hallett J in *Foaminol Laboratories Ltd v. British Artid Plastics Ltd* [1941] 2 All ER 393 to the effect that:

> ... a claim for mere loss of reputation is the proper subject of an action for defamation, and cannot ordinarily be sustained by any other form of action ...

[111] Defendants' counsel argues that since there is no plea of defamation, paras. 3.8, 3.9, 3.10, 3.11, 4.3 and 9.3 of the statement of claim ought to be struck out. I disagree with that contention for several reasons. In the case of *Spring v. Guardian Assurance PLC and Others* the issue before the court was whether an ex-employer owed a duty of care to an ex-employee when giving a character reference to a prospective new employer and whether there was an implied term in the contract of employment that any such reference be prepared with reasonable care. The issue was not one of what is the proper cause of action when the injury suffered is loss of reputation. Thus, the remarks of Lord Goff must be seen in the factual context of the basis of the plaintiff's claim in that case, which is the publication of a reference letter by the defendant, the contents of which were said to be highly critical of the plaintiff and had adversely affected the plaintiff's reputation and professional standing. Therefore, in the context of the facts of that case, Lord Goff was making the observation that "a claim for mere loss of reputation is the proper subject of an action for defamation, and cannot ordinarily be sustained by any other form of action" in determining whether a claim in negligence can lay against the defendant for the issuance of the said letter of reference. This statement cannot be construed as laying down a general proposition of the law. Secondly, the loss of reputation or character need not necessarily arise only from libel or slander. It can also arise in circumstances such as when a person is wrongly arrested or charged with an offence, which is the complaint of the plaintiff herein. Thirdly, the plea of loss of reputation and character also goes towards the issue of damages. In assessing damages, in the event that the plaintiff were to successfully prove liability on the part of the defendants, the issue of loss of reputation and character would be relevant consideration and evidence in this regard could only be brought in if the matter had been pleaded. Fourthly, the plaintiff's claim herein is not 'for mere loss of reputation'. Apart from loss of reputation and character as well as personal and societal standing, the plaintiff

also claims that his career as an advocate and solicitor has been affected. The plaintiff's complaint is that he had been targeted and victimised for his role as legal adviser to Dato' Ramli. And therefore, in this regard, my opinion is that the issues of loss of professional and societal standing are relevant matters to be pleaded. Apart from that the plaintiff also pleads that he has suffered injury, trauma and anxiety as a result of the defendants' action. The plaintiff also claims that he has been put to expense in the amount of RM750,000 as legal cost to defend the charge against him. So clearly, the plaintiff's claim is not a mere claim for loss of reputation, of which, vindication could only be sought by way of an action for defamation.

Reference To Pleadings In Other Suits

[112] In para. 3.12 of the statement of claim the plaintiff refers to matters pleaded in another suit and adopts those pleadings as part of the plaintiff's pleadings herein. Counsel for the defendants submits that para. 3.12 of the statement of claim cannot stand as the plaintiff cannot refer to other statements of claim that the plaintiff may have filed in other suits and adopt the same. Counsel contends that the plaintiff must plead those matters specifically in the statement of claim. Counsel draws strength for that submission from The Supreme Court Practice 1999 Vol. 1 para. 18/6/3, which lays down the proposition that an appendix or annexure to a statement of claim does not form part of the pleadings in the following terms:

> Schedules – A schedule is information in documentary form which is annexed to a pleading. It does not itself fall within the definition of pleading, and may be attached to a pleading only if the leave of the Master has been obtained, which leave should be obtained *ex parte* ... In those libel cases in which the offending material is so long that it cannot reasonably be pleaded in the statement of claim, leave should be sought to plead the libel by schedule. Even then, the precise words should be clearly identified and distinguished from any surrounding material. Material to which the other party may need to plead must not be contained in a schedule as it is not a pleading.

[113] I agree that particulars of wrongdoing alleged by the plaintiff against the defendants should more appropriately be specifically pleaded in the body of the statement of claim rather that refer to pleadings filed by the plaintiff in some other suit and annexing the same to the statement of claim. However, even on

the authority of commentary in The Supreme Court Practice 1999 Vol. 1 para. 18/6/3, there is no blanket prohibition against the annexing of information to the statement of claim by way of a schedule or annexure. The commentary when analysed shows that such schedules or annexures may be allowed with leave of court. And in the absence of leave the defendants need not respond to those pleas in the defence. In any event, the complaint of the defendants can be easily cured by an amendment to the pleadings to include the specific plea of the alleged wrongful acts pleaded in the other suit by amending para. 3.12 of the statement of claim. As such I do not think that the defect complained of by the defendants can be grounds to strike out the entire statement of claim.

[114] Wherefore, I dismissed encl. 4 with cost.